

Ambassador Niels Marquardt opened his residence to a crowd of over 250 invited guests to watch the results of Election 2008. Guests included Malagasy government officials, several Ministers, Senators and parliamentarians, the Mayor Antananarivo, the diplomatic corps and representatives from international organizations, Peace Corps volunteers, business people, local American citizens, Mission staff and representatives of all major Malagasy media outlets. A television crew from the national television station was on hand with the hosts from local television program, "Teen Talk" a collaborative effort between the Public Affairs Section, Peace Corps, and Post's English Language Fellow. Footage from the event will air later this month on the bi-weekly broadcast.

Mission staff set the pace by creating an extremely festive campaign atmosphere with balloons, bunting and a plethora of campaign paraphernalia from both candidates. In addition, Post set up several large flat screen television viewing areas and internet stations for guests to follow election events in battle ground states. Mission Officers spread throughout the residence engaging with guests and explaining the U.S. electoral process, including the Electoral College and Senate and House races and the events as they unfolded. Guests happily participated in a mock election overwhelmingly "electing" Senator Barack Obama. The entire event was buzzing with excitement and guests were extremely engaged in the entire process arriving at 5 am and staying through President-Elect Obama's victory speech.

Post also set-up a television viewing station for biographical videos of both candidates and promotional material for the Democracy Video Challenge. The IIP poster show on "Democracy in America" was displayed prominently at the event in order to give the guests an overview of the democratic process in the United States.

This event was an excellent example of various Mission elements working in coordination to ensure a positive and successful outcome. The Executive Office, Public Affairs Section, Political/Economic Section, GSO, and the Information Program Center all played critical roles in this spectacular program.



The Mayor of Antananarivo, Andry Rajoelina (center), with his wife (his right) and Embassy Staff



Ambassador Marquardt with President-Elect Obama and the Mayor of Antananarivo





“Teen Talk” Crew interviewing Embassy Employee Bruno Ramiandrisoa



Ambassador Marquardt Talking with Malagasy journalists